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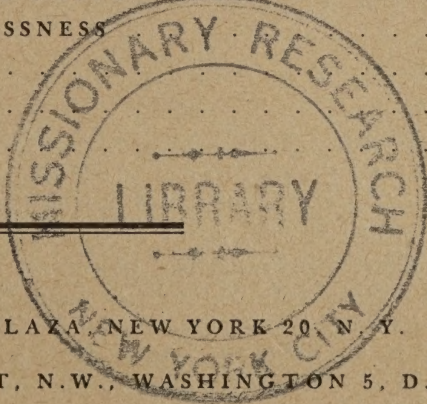
## REFERENCE DIVISION

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# BRITAIN AND PALESTINE

## I. THE PROMISES MADE

Before World War I, what is now known as Palestine was part of the Turkish Empire. Its population was about 650,000, of whom about 85,000 to 90,000 were Jews.

In 1915, the British, anxious in their Middle Eastern campaigns to secure all possible support from the Arab peoples, held out to them the hope of independence. The British promise, conveyed in a letter from Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Cairo, to Sherif Hussein of Mecca, stated that except in certain specified districts Britain was prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions demanded by the Sherif of Mecca. The British Government has always maintained\* that the whole of Palestine west of the Jordan was one of the regions excluded from the pledge given to the Arabs in 1915.

In the meantime, the British Government had become sympathetic to the idea of establishing in Palestine a "National Home for the Jewish people." The Jews had never given up their link with their ancestral home, and from 1900 onwards a growing Zionist movement had encouraged the "return to Palestine" and the development of the existing Jewish agricultural colonies. On November 2, 1917, a letter, subsequently known as the Balfour Declaration, from Mr. Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary (later Lord Balfour), to Lord Rothschild stated:

"His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country."

Clarifying this Declaration in 1922, Mr. Churchill (then Colonial Secretary) stated† that "the terms of the Declaration do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded in *Palestine*." By this phrase, he said, was meant "not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole but the further development of the existing Jewish community . . . in order that it might become a center in which the Jewish people as a whole may take . . . an interest and pride."

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\* See Churchill Memorandum on British policy in Palestine (reprinted in *Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization*, Cmd. 1700) and memorandum presented by U.K. representatives to the Conferences on Palestine, St. James's Palace, 1939 (Annex B to *Report of a Committee set up to Consider Certain Correspondence Between Sir Henry McMahon . . . and the Sharif of Mecca*, Cmd. 5974).

† See Churchill Memorandum, *loc. cit.*



## II. THE PALESTINE MANDATE, 1922

The Mandates System for governing ex-enemy territories was established by Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and Britain was made the Mandatory Power for Palestine. The Mandate, as issued in July, 1922, applied not only to Palestine proper but also to Trans-Jordan; but before it came into force the Council of the League of Nations agreed\* that certain sections of the Mandate, including that relating to the establishment of the Jewish National Home, were not to apply to Trans-Jordan.

Under the terms of the Mandate, Britain undertook:

1. To facilitate the development of the Jewish National Home;
2. To develop self-governing institutions;
3. To safeguard the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine.

Britain was to submit annually a report to the Council of the League of Nations. If any dispute arose between Britain and another Member of the League of Nations on the interpretation or application of the Mandate, it was to be submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice provided under Article 14 of the Covenant of the League. The Council of the League was to approve any modification of the terms of the Mandate.

## III. PALESTINE, 1920-1939

### 1. DEVELOPMENT

Palestine made remarkable economic progress during this period, the outstanding factor being undoubtedly the immense enthusiasm of the Jewish pioneers and the support received by them from Jews throughout the world who were sympathetic to their efforts. At the same time, the economic position of the Arabs greatly improved.

Population increased as follows:

Year	Total	Moslems	Jews	Christians	Others
1922	752,048	589,177	83,790	71,464	7,617
1938†	1,418,619	895,159	399,808	111,796	11,856

In this period, immigration of the Jews was controlled by the Government of Palestine on the principle, laid down in the Churchill Memorandum of 1922, that it was not to be "so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals." The influx of refugees from Nazi persecution is shown by the fact that 219,115 Jews immigrated to Palestine between 1932 and 1938.

Some figures of economic development follow (figures in millions):

Year	Imports	Exports	Revenue	Expenditure	Overseas shipping tonnage cleared
	£	£	£	£	
1922	7.2	1.6	2.3	2.1	2.0
1935	17.9	4.2	5.7	4.2	5.5
1938	13.6	5.0	4.5	5.3	5.2

\* See Cmd. 1785: *League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, Together with a Note by the Secretary-General Relating to its Application to the Territory Known as Transjordan, Under the Provisions of Article 25.*

† The settled population of Palestine in 1944 was 1,673,000, of whom 995,000 were Moslems, 529,000 Jews, and 136,000 Christians.



Some 80 per cent of the exports were citrus fruits, mainly Jaffa oranges (9.6 million cases in 1937-38) and grapefruit (1.8 million cases). The Arab orange groves were nearly as extensive as the Jewish.

During the Thirties, and especially with the influx of Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, industry was increasingly developed.

## 2. PROPOSALS FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

Since 1920, Palestine has been governed by successive High Commissioners appointed by Britain.

One of the earliest measures in 1920 of the first High Commissioner was to set up an Advisory Council consisting of ten British officials and ten Palestinians (seven Arabs and three Jews).

In 1922, the High Commissioner put forward a proposal for a Legislative Council consisting of the High Commissioner, ten official and twelve elected members, of whom ten were to be Arabs and two Jews. The Arabs, however, refused to accept this offer which "fell short of the demands of the Arab population."

In 1928 and 1929, Arab delegations petitioned for the establishment of an elective parliament. But the riots of 1929 put an end to the possibility for some time. The Arabs continually pressed for "democratic government" in which, naturally, they would have commanded an overwhelming majority.

In December, 1935, the High Commissioner put forward a plan for a new Constitution representing a considerable advance towards representative government. He proposed a Legislative Council with 28 members made up as follows: five officials, two commercial representatives, eight elected and three nominated Moslems, three elected and four nominated Jews, and one elected and two nominated Christians, plus an impartial president from outside Palestine who would neither debate nor vote.

Some Arabs were willing to accept this plan, though the majority asked for drastic alteration. The Jews were unanimous in rejecting the plan because, in their view, it would preclude the establishment of the promised National Home.

The riots which broke out in 1936 prevented any further discussion of this proposal.

## 3. CONFLICT

The riots which troubled Palestine during this period were all connected basically with the Arab desire for independence, which led them to oppose continued Jewish immigration and settlement. They argued that Great Britain would have granted independence to Palestine, as she had to Iraq, if it were not for the necessity of protecting the right of the Jewish minority to develop its National Home. The first riots occurred in 1920, followed by disturbances in 1921, 1929, 1933, 1936, and finally a sustained "Arab Revolt" in 1937-39. The disturbances of 1936 and, even



more, of 1937-39 were certainly helped by Axis propaganda, and even Axis funds.

After each disturbance the British Government appointed a Commission in an attempt not only to analyze the causes but to find a solution to the problems. The most detailed analysis was provided by the Royal Commission (under Lord Peel) which visited Palestine after the 1936 riot, and presented its Report in July, 1937.\*

Among the causes of the riots, the Peel Report listed:

(a) The effect on Arab opinion in Palestine of the attainment of national independence first by Iraq, to a less complete extent by Trans-Jordan, then by Egypt, and lastly envisaged for Syria and Lebanon.

(b) The pressure on Palestine exerted by the heavy immigration into Palestine of Jews following the persecutions in Europe, and the Arab fear of Jewish domination over Palestine.

(c) The general uncertainty as to the ultimate intentions of Britain. On the one hand, this had stimulated the Jews to consolidate their position as quickly as might be. On the other, the conciliatory policy of the Palestine Government had encouraged some Arabs to believe that the British determination to implement the Balfour Declaration was not wholehearted.

The Report stated that the Palestine Government had been forced to "govern by arithmetic" in order to hold the balance between, on the one hand, a Jewish National Home which had long passed the experimental stage, and, on the other, an Arab community which, though it had prospered and increased since 1920, was showing a nationalistic and anti-Jewish mood from which it could not at the moment be deflected by considerations of material gain.

The Report made a number of detailed recommendations, but its main conclusion was that the Mandate in its existing form was unworkable, and that the only solution was the "partition" of Palestine into three parts—an Arab State, a Jewish State, and a neutral enclave in which Britain would continue to safeguard the Holy Places at Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Though the plan was opposed, with varying degrees of vehemence, by different groups of both Jews and Arabs, and accepted in principle by very few, the British Government was asked by the League of Nations to explore the idea further. A British Technical Commission was, therefore, sent to Palestine to examine the practical possibilities of partition, but it reported that the political and financial difficulties involved were too great. Accordingly, the British Government withdrew this proposal, and, instead, invited representatives of the two communities, together with representatives of the Jewish Agency and the Arab States, to meet for discussion with them in London in the hope of finding a policy acceptable for all.

The Conference met in London in February, 1939, but no common lines of agreement could be found; and, indeed, Palestinian Arabs refused even to sit at the same conference table with the Jewish delegates. The

\* Cmd. 5479: *Palestine Royal Commission. Report*, 1937. \$2.05.



British Government put forward proposals for an agreed settlement, and, on rejection, revised them further. But the Conference came to an end without having reached any agreement.

#### IV. THE WHITE PAPER, 1939

In May, 1939, the Government published its final proposals to the London Conference as a White Paper.\* It was the British Government's contention that in the circumstances these proposals were the only way in which it could discharge its obligations to both the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine.

The basic point of the 1939 White Paper was the proposal that within ten years after 1939 an independent Palestine State should be created. To prepare for this, an appropriate body representative of the people of Palestine was to be set up at the end of five years (that is, in 1944) to make recommendations for the Constitution of the new state; and, in the meantime, Palestinians were to be given an increasing part in the Government of their country, acting, with British advisers, as heads of certain departments.

At the same time, the White Paper asserted that to ensure a possibility of peaceful development, the Arabs of Palestine had to be assured that unlimited Jewish immigration and land purchase would not put the Arabs into the position of a minority. Accordingly, it laid down:

(a) That in the ensuing five years a maximum of 75,000 Jews would be admitted to Palestine, following which there would be no further Jewish immigration without Arab acquiescence; and

(b) That Jewish purchase of land would be prohibited in certain districts and restricted in others.

The White Paper argued that to allow the Jewish National Home in Palestine to expand indefinitely by immigration was a policy involving of necessity "rule by force" which would be contrary to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and to Britain's specific obligations to the Arabs of Palestine under the Mandate. "Taking into account the extent to which the growth of the Jewish National Home has been facilitated over the last 20 years," the time had come, said the White Paper, to adopt a policy which, though placing limits on Jewish expansion, would allow Palestine to become independent, with Arabs and Jews sharing in the Government "in such a way that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded."

The Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, at its meeting in June, 1939, considered the White Paper policy and submitted observations on it to the Council of the League. Four members of the Commission held that the White Paper was inconsistent with the Mandate. Three would go no further than to say that it was not in accordance with the Commission's previous interpretation of the Mandate, and that the opinion of the Council should be sought on whether a new interpretation was possible in the light of circumstances. The outbreak of war in September, however, prevented the consideration by the League Council of the P.M.C.'s report and of the British Government's comments thereon.

\* Cmd. 6019: *Palestine, Statement of Policy*. 10s.



## V. THE MANDATE DURING THE WAR

By the terms of the Mandate, Britain was not permitted to draft Palestinians into the armed forces, but voluntary recruitment was started at the beginning of the war, and the enlistment figures published in 1943 gave a total of 29,000 Palestinians, of whom 21,000 were Jews (including 2,200 women in the A.T.S.) and 8,000 Arabs. At first, efforts were made to secure Jewish and Arab co-operation within units, but this met with insufficient success, and separate Arab and Jewish units were formed, though the word "Palestinian" was still exclusively used. In September, 1944, however, Jewish representations were met by the formation of a Jewish Brigade, which saw service in the campaign in Italy. The Arab Legion of the Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, played a part in the suppression of the Rashid Ali rebellion in Iraq in 1941, and later operated against the Vichy forces in Syria. Industry and agriculture in Palestine and the technical skills brought by Jewish refugees from Europe made valuable contributions to the war effort.

The refugee problem of the war years was world-wide. Britain herself, highly populated and fighting for her existence, gave shelter to some 60,000 refugees, a large proportion of them Jews, in the period 1940 to 1943, and other Empire territories offering refuge were India, Cyprus, Uganda, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and Somaliland. In arranging for Jewish refugees to reach Palestine under the quota laid down in the 1939 White Paper, the greatest difficulties were encountered, not only in the provision and safe conduct of shipping but in the diplomatic task of rescuing from Europe the victims of persecution, especially from Bulgaria and Rumania. Nevertheless, 67,000 immigration permits for Palestine were granted between April 1, 1939, and March 31, 1944; and 51,186 immigrants, plus their wives and children, entered Palestine during this period.

This was not equal to the pace of immigration that had been anticipated in the White Paper of 1939. That statement of policy had envisaged March 31, 1944, as the date beyond which immigration would be possible only with Arab acquiescence. On account of the grave obstacles to immigration encountered during the war, however, the period was extended in the statement made by Col. Oliver Stanley (Secretary of State for the Colonies) on November 10, 1943.

## VI. ANGLO-AMERICAN COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

The British Government which took office at the end of July, 1945, set out to try to find a permanent solution to the problem of Palestine, in circumstances greatly aggravated by the years of warfare and the persecutions in Europe. The Arabs of Palestine were strongly supported by neighboring Arab countries (whose nascent nationalism was a direct result of the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire in World War I) in their adamant objection to any change in the White Paper policy of 1939—to which, they claimed, Britain was now committed. This policy was op-



posed with no less vehemence by the Jewish Agency, speaking for most of the Jews of Palestine and reflecting Zionist opinion throughout the world. Strongly supported by pro-Zionist opinion in the United States, the Jewish Agency had gone further to support the "Biltmore Program," which called for the ultimate establishment of the whole of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth.

With the occupation of Nazi-dominated Europe by Allied troops, the full horror of Nazi persecution and slaughter of the Jews had been substantiated. Surveys showed that 6,000,000 Jews had been killed. The survivors were scattered in camps or wandering homelessly in many parts of Europe, filled (according to many reports) with the desire to find refuge with their own kin in Palestine.

Zionists (supported strongly by many sympathetic non-Zionists) pressed for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine.

Palestine itself was once more torn by violence. In pre-war years violence had come (with very few exceptions) from the Arab side, notably in the outbreaks of 1936-39. In 1944, however, isolated terrorist acts began to be initiated by Jewish extremists, culminating in the assassination of Lord Moyne in Cairo in December, 1944. There was a lull until the end of the war with Germany, but immediately following V-E Day, a wave of violent terrorist activity broke out on the part of two Jewish extremist groups, resulting in numerous explosions, holdups, and shootings.

Against this somber background, the British Government felt it imperative to find an immigration policy which would be acceptable to Arab as well as Jewish opinion; and, before taking any final decisions on the future of Jewish survivors in Europe, they wished to survey the pressing refugee problem in its broadest aspects, to examine the possibilities of absorption in Europe itself and in other countries of the world, as well as in Palestine. On November 13, 1945, the Foreign Secretary (Mr. Ernest Bevin) announced that agreement had been reached with the United States Government (which was closely interested) to set up a joint Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry which would examine quickly all these inter-related problems, and make both immediate and long-term proposals. During the interim period, Jewish immigration to Palestine would be continued at the current rate of 1,500 a month.

The Committee, consisting of six British and six United States members (including rotating British and United States chairmen), began work immediately. They took evidence in the United States, Britain, Europe, and Palestine, and published their Report (Cmd. 6808)\* on May 1, 1946. Surveying the whole field, the Report of the Committee made ten unanimous recommendations which may be summarized as follows:

1. There were few opportunities, at present, for displaced Jews in any number other than in Palestine. But Palestine alone could not meet the problem. The two Governments, therefore, in association with other countries, should endeavor to find new homes for displaced Jews where needed, and should ensure that free conditions were guaranteed for those Jews who continued to live in Europe.

\* Available from Sales Department, B.I.S., price 45¢. (Page 7, paragraph 4.)



2. Certificates for admission to Palestine should be authorized immediately for 100,000 Jewish victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution. Immigration should be conducted as rapidly as conditions would permit.

3. A clear statement should be made on the political future of Palestine, to the effect that Jew shall not dominate Arab and Arab shall not dominate Jew in Palestine; that Palestine shall be neither a Jewish nor an Arab State; and that Palestine must ultimately become a self-governing State, guarding the rights of Moslem, Jew, and Christian alike.

4. To establish an independent Palestinian State or States now would result in civil strife which might threaten the peace of the world. Until Arab-Jewish hostility disappears, therefore, the Government of Palestine should be continued as at present under mandate, pending the execution of a Trusteeship agreement under the United Nations.

5. The Mandatory or Trustee should proclaim the principle that Arab economic, educational, and political advancement in Palestine is of equal importance with that of the Jews, and should at once prepare measures designed to raise the Arab standard of living to that of the Jews.

6. Pending the early reference to the United Nations and the execution of a Trusteeship agreement, the Mandatory should administer Palestine according to the Mandate, which declares that "the administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions."

7. The Land Transfers Regulations of 1940 should be rescinded, allowing full freedom to all in the sale, lease, or use of land. Holy Places and localities should be protected from desecration.

8. Large-scale plans for economic development cannot succeed without peace in Palestine, and without the willing co-operation of adjacent Arab States. These plans should be examined and executed not only in full consultation with the Jewish Agency but also with the Governments of the neighboring Arab States.

9. The educational system of both Jews and Arabs should be reformed in the interests of conciliation and of the general improvement of the Arab standard of living.

10. It should be made clear beyond all doubt to both Jews and Arabs that any attempt from either side, by threats of violence, by terrorism, or by the organization or use of illegal armies to prevent the execution of the Report will be resolutely suppressed. The Jewish Agency should at once resume active co-operation with the Mandatory in the suppression of terrorism and of illegal immigration, and in the maintenance of law and order throughout Palestine.



## VII. RECEPTION OF THE REPORT

The Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee) made a statement on the Report to the House of Commons on May 1, 1946, in which he made the following main points:

(a) The Report would have to be considered as a whole in all its implications.

(b) Its execution would entail very heavy immediate and long-term commitments, and the Government wish to be satisfied that they would not be called upon to implement a policy which would involve them singlehanded in such commitments. They would consult the United States Government "to ascertain to what extent the Government of the United States would be prepared to share the resulting military and financial responsibilities."

(c) It was clear from the facts presented in the Report regarding the illegal armies maintained in Palestine and their recent activities that it would not be possible for the Government to admit a large body of immigrants unless and until those formations had been disbanded, and their armies surrendered. The Jewish Agency should take a positive part in the suppression of those activities.

On the *Arab* side, the recommendations of the Report were denounced as "a threat to the national existence of the Arabs in Palestine." They were held to be "a violation of the rights of self-determination, of the pledges to the Arabs by the British, of the Atlantic Charter, and of the principles for which the Allies waged war." Mass strikes were held, and the Arab boycott of Jewish goods and services was intensified. The Arabs indicated that they would resume "the national struggle" if the recommendations were implemented.

On the *Zionist* side, the recommendation for the admission of 100,000 refugees was welcomed, but there was no enthusiasm for the Report as a whole. While terrorism was deplored, it was held by Zionist leaders that the main "illegal army" referred to—the Haganah—was a defense force, and could not be disbanded.

Pressed for a quick decision from many sides, the British Foreign Office issued the following statement on May 15, 1946:

"His Majesty's Government are continuing their examination of the Report. . . . They will not be in a position to announce their decisions on the Committee's recommendations concerning Palestine until they have completed their consultations with the U. S. Government, and have also consulted leaders of both the Arabs and the Jews. This procedure is in accordance with the pledges given by His Majesty's Government when the formation of the Committee was announced, and on earlier occasions.

"They note that the U. S. Government have given a similar assurance that their decision on the Report will not be taken until Arabs and Jews have been consulted."

In line with this program, Arab and Jewish leaders were officially invited on May 20, in interviews with the British High Commissioner and



the U. S. Consul-General in Palestine, to frame their views on the ten recommendations of the Report, and to submit them for consideration by the British and United States Governments by June 20. These invitations were accepted.

In the meantime, however, the conditions of law and order, held by the Report to be an essential prerequisite to any carrying out of the recommendations, were growing rapidly worse. Large numbers of immigrants without visas, crowded in small ships, attempted to land, and were removed to clearance camps in Palestine. Terrorist activities continued, and on June 16 eight bridges and the Palestine central railroad workshops at Haifa were blown up, resulting in 18 deaths to Jewish armed raiders and one British officer killed. Six British officers were kidnapped as hostages and two others wounded on June 18, and other shootings and acts of violence occurred. British forces engaged in continual searches for arms, explosives, and terrorists, with bitterness on all sides mounting disastrously.

## VIII. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE U. S. GOVERNMENT

On June 14, 1946, it was announced in Washington and London that United States officials, representing the President's Cabinet Committee on Palestine and Related Problems, were proceeding immediately to London to discuss with British officials the practical possibilities of implementing the recommendations of the Report, in the light of the comments of Arab and Jewish groups on these recommendations. While underlining the need for these technical discussions to be completed with all possible urgency, the British Government stated officially that they would await the result of these conversations before determining their policy in relation to the recommendations of the Report. A spokesman of the State Department emphasized that the United States officials would only "make recommendations" which would have to be considered by the President's Cabinet Committee.

On June 28, it was announced that preliminary discussions had been completed on the technical problems involved in implementing Recommendation 2—the immigration of 100,000 Jews to Palestine—and that members of President Truman's Cabinet Committee would leave for London on July 15 for further discussions with British officials on the wider problems of Palestine's future.

## IX. SPECIAL MEASURES TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER

In all these negotiations and discussions, the British Government was seeking a final solution that would satisfy all the parties concerned. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry had decided, after considering the alternatives, to recommend a "unitary" solution to Palestine's problems, with Jews and Arabs working together, as joint citizens of one State, for their common good. But this predicated the establishment of Arab-Jewish harmony, which became a more and more remote possibility as acts of violence increased. In an attempt to restore law and order during the



final stages of discussion, the Government felt obliged to take firm steps, with regard both to illegal armies and immigration.

*Illegal Armies:* On June 29, 1946, British forces occupied the buildings of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem and certain buildings in Tel Aviv, initiated thorough searches in numerous Jewish settlements, and detained about 2,000 Jews for questioning. The purpose of this operation was to uncover and take steps against the organizations which had conducted terrorist activities in Palestine; and among those interned in detention camps were a number of Jewish Agency leaders, who were implicated in these illegal activities. The Prime Minister emphasized to Parliament that "these operations were not directed against the Jewish community as a whole, but solely against those who had taken an active part in the campaign of violence and those responsible for instigating and directing it."\*

The Government, he said, would not "tolerate any attempts by any party to influence a decision in the Palestine question by force."

Mr. Attlee said that there was deep sympathy for the sufferings of the Jews in Europe, but this could not condone the current campaign of violence. Since December, 1945, 16 British soldiers and five police had been killed, including five assassinated in cold blood in Tel Aviv on April 25; and material damage done had exceeded £4,000,000. He appealed to all persons of good will in Palestine to co-operate with the authorities in rooting out these illegalities and restoring normal conditions of life. Meanwhile, the Government would persevere in their attempts to arrive without delay, in consultation with the United States Government, at "a just and lasting settlement of these problems."

Terrorism continued, however, culminating in an act that dwarfed all others. On July 22, the King David Hotel in Jerusalem (the British Headquarters) was blown up, the casualty list being 106 persons—Arabs, Jewish, and British—killed or missing, and 46 wounded. Responsible Zionist leaders throughout the world condemned the outrage in unequivocal terms.† Arrests and intensive searches following the explosion led to still further mutual bitterness in Palestine.

*Transfers to Cyprus:* On August 12, the Government issued a statement which announced a new policy with regard to immigrants arriving without visas. During the negotiations, a quota of 1,500 legal immigrants a month had been set, but a great volume of unauthorized immigrants, arriving in overcrowded, unseaworthy ships, and in conditions of the utmost privation and squalor, had been converging on Palestine "through a widely ramified and highly organized movement . . . which had been built up and put into operation by unscrupulous persons in an attempt to force the hand of His Majesty's Government and anticipate their decision on future policy in Palestine." These immigrants had, so far, been allowed to land, being set against the quota or held in camps in Palestine; but this had led to very great difficulties in Palestine itself and unfairness

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\* On July 25, 1946, the Government published a White Paper (Cmd. 6873) containing transcripts of certain intercepted telegrams from which it appeared that some members of the Jewish Agency were aware of, or connected with, the extremist activities which had taken place in Palestine.

† Prof. Selig Brodetsky, leading British Zionist, referred to it as: "Our disaster, a lowering of the name of Jewry, a lowering of all that for which Palestine stands."



to those who should have had the highest priority to enter under the quota. Many more ships were on their way, said the statement, and accordingly, immigrants arriving illegally henceforward would be transferred to Cyprus or elsewhere, where "all reasonable measures would be taken for their health and well-being."

The statement emphasized that this decision by no means prejudiced a general decision on increased Jewish immigration to Palestine. On the contrary, it pointed out, the Government had already accepted, as a basis of negotiation, a plan drawn up by British and American experts "which was designed to provide for increased immigration into Palestine under conditions which would not disturb the peace and economy of the country." But the continuance of "illegal traffic" at the present time "would be likely to have an adverse effect on the hope of a general settlement in Palestine."\*

## X. BRITAIN AND THE REFUGEES

In asking for a clear understanding of Britain's motives in transferring illegal immigrants to Cyprus, the official statement of August 12, 1946, summarized Britain's record with regard to helping the Jewish victims of Nazism:

"No country in the world has been a better or more consistent friend of the Jewish people than Britain. Wherever the Jews were persecuted, the voice of Britain was lifted in protest and, wherever possible, action was taken to mitigate their lot.

"When they were persecuted by Hitler, the British people not only protested most vigorously, but a large body of refugees from Nazi barbarism were received in our country. Even during the war, when our people were hard pressed for shelter and supplies, more were allowed in. Altogether 200,000 refugees—a large proportion of them Jews—landed in Britain.

"It was under the British Mandate that nearly 500,000 Jews settled legally in Palestine where a great Jewish community now exists. When it was threatened with Nazi invasion—a terrible threat to the Palestine Jews—British arms prevented that dread possibility. The Jews in Palestine were given arms so that they might be equipped for their own defense against their would-be liquidators from Nazi Germany, and to enable them to take a part in the common struggle. In Britain there are no pogroms: Jews enjoy all the rights of civil liberty.

"Such is the record of this Island, now the subject of bitter and unfair attack by many—though by no means all—Jews, on account of the unhappy events in Palestine, in the course of which British soldiers, doing their duty, have been killed, wounded, and kidnapped, not in open and straightforward battle, but from ambush, and even in the course of hospitality. Moreover, civil servants serving Palestine no

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\* Illegal attempts to land visaless immigrants in Palestine nevertheless continued, often in dangerous conditions aboard ill-found vessels. It was reported from Cyprus on March 9, 1947, that according to official figures, 13,724 deported immigrants had arrived in the island by that date. Of these, 3,942 had been returned to Palestine against the quota.



less than Britain, and ordinary quiet citizens, going about their peaceful business, have been the victims of outrage more worthy of the Nazis than of the Jews.

"Against this background, His Majesty's Government give the facts and their decision about the illegal immigration to Palestine which threatens both civil war and breakdown of government in that historic land."

The statement then surveyed the position in regard to immigration. As explained above (Section V), the period during which immigrants could be admitted under the quota of 75,000 set forth in the White Paper of 1939 had already been extended in November, 1943. By December, 1945, that quota had been exhausted, and under the 1939 policy immigration should thereafter be conditional upon Arab consent. Nevertheless, the British Government had authorized the continuance of Jewish immigration at the rate of 1,500 a month, pending a final decision on a future policy for Palestine.

"Instead of this provision being accepted pending decisions on a long-term policy," the statement continued, "there has been an increasing flow of illegal immigrants into Palestine." The decision to transfer illegal arrivals to Cyprus or elsewhere, summarized in the foregoing section (IX), was then set forth, and the statement concluded:

"His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that, while they cannot tolerate this attempt by a minority of Zionist extremists to exploit the sufferings of unfortunate people in order to create a situation prejudicial to a just settlement, they are deeply sensible of the sufferings undergone by the Jewish community, and are anxious to bring them to an end as soon as possible.

"It is clear that a permanent solution of this complicated question can only be brought about if Jews and Arabs are prepared to enter upon discussions in a realistic and constructive spirit in order to evolve a practical scheme for harmonizing the claims of these two historic peoples."

## XI. PLAN OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN EXPERTS

On July 31 and August 1, 1946, a plan, which had been worked out by the expert delegations of British and American officials, had been put before Parliament and debated.

On the help to be given to displaced Jews in Europe, the expert delegations followed the Anglo-American Report in urging the establishment of guaranteed conditions for those Jews who wished to live there, and the expansion of opportunities for those who wished to emigrate overseas. Speaking for the British Government, Mr. Herbert Morrison said that Britain would press for the establishment of an International Refugee Organization, and give strong support at the General Assembly of the United Nations to an appeal calling on all member-Governments to receive a proportion of the displaced persons. He said that Britain and the United States had already made, and would continue to make, a large con-



tribution; that British Dominions were being informed of the steps taken in the hope that they would receive numbers of immigrants; and that "plans were in preparation, in co-operation with the nations concerned, for resettling large numbers of displaced persons in Brazil and other South American countries."

On Palestine, he said, the Anglo-American expert delegations were forced to the view that the conflict of political aspirations between Arabs and Jews was so bitter that there was little hope of securing within any reasonable period that measure of co-operation which would make possible the establishment of a unitary system of Government:

"The only chance of peace, and of immediate advance towards self-governing institutions, appears to lie in so framing the constitution of the country as to give to each the greatest practicable measure of power to manage its own affairs. The experts believe that, in present circumstances, this can best be secured by the establishment of Arab and Jewish Provinces, which will enjoy a large measure of autonomy under a Central Government.

"It is their proposal that, for this purpose, Palestine shall be divided into four areas, an Arab Province, a Jewish Province, a District of Jerusalem, and a District of Negeb. The Jewish Province would include the great bulk of the land on which Jews have already settled and a considerable area between and around the settlements. The Jerusalem District would include Jerusalem, Bethlehem and their immediate environs. The Negeb District would consist of the uninhabited triangle of waste land in the south of Palestine beyond the present limits of cultivation. The Arab Province would include the remainder of Palestine, it would be almost wholly Arab in respect both of land and of population."

The provincial governments would have power of legislation and administration over a wide field, leaving to the Central Government (which would also administer the Negeb, for the time being) "exclusive authority" as to defense, law and order, foreign relations, and customs and excise.

This plan, he claimed, would greatly simplify the problem of Jewish immigration into Palestine, for though the Central Government would have the final power, it would normally authorize the immigration desired by a provincial government, provided the economic absorptive capacity of the province was not exceeded.

In this way, "it would become possible to accept the recommendation of the Anglo-American Committee for the admission of 100,000 Jewish immigrants and for continuing immigration thereafter." Immigration, under the experts' plan, could be set in motion as soon as the plan was agreed, and 100,000 could immigrate within 12 months.

Under the plan, the United States Government would be asked to undertake sole responsibility for the sea transportation of Jewish refugees from Europe to Palestine, and for providing food for the immigrants for their first two months in Palestine. The Jewish organizations had accepted the financial responsibility for settling the refugees.

It would be necessary, at the same time, to provide means for raising the health and educational standards of the Arabs, meeting the heavy



capital costs of economic development, and balancing revenue losses of the Arab Province. "To meet this situation, the experts suggested that the United States be asked to make a substantial grant to the Government of Palestine, to be used principally for financing Arab development projects not suitable for self-liquidating loans, and for assisting in the meeting of extraordinary expenditure during the transitional period, while Britain should be asked to take ultimate responsibility for meeting Palestine's annual budgetary deficit up to the time when increased revenues made this unnecessary."

The experts suggested also that the United States could help adjacent Arab countries, whose economic development was closely linked with that of Palestine, to obtain large-scale development loans.

These proposals, said Mr. Morrison, were, in the opinion of the British Government, "the best line of advance towards a solution of the problem," and were accepted by them as "the basis for negotiation." The United States Government was still considering its views on the question. In the meantime, the British Government was inviting the representatives of the Jews and Arabs to meet them for discussion, with this plan as the "basis for negotiation." If it were found acceptable, Britain's intention was to have it embodied in a Trusteeship agreement for Palestine. (Mr. George Hall, Colonial Secretary, elaborated the reference to a Trusteeship agreement on August 1.)

In the immediate future, said Mr. Morrison, the plan would offer both Jews and Arabs freedom to develop without fear of domination one by the other. If peaceful progress resulted, the way would be open to a fully developed federal constitution. "On the other hand, if the centrifugal forces prove too strong, the way is open to partition."

One thing, however, must be made clear, he said. "The full implementation of the experts' plan as a whole depends on United States co-operation. I hope that that will be forthcoming. If not, we shall have to reconsider the position, particularly as regards the economic and financial implications, and this is bound to affect the tempo and extent of immigration and development."

## XII. UNITED STATES ATTITUDE

On August 16, 1946, President Truman issued a statement explaining that his Government has "not presented any plan of its own for a solution of the problem of Palestine" and expressing the "sincere hope that, as a result of the proposed conversations between the British Government and the Jewish and Arab representatives, a fair solution of the problem of Palestine can be found and immediate steps can be taken to alleviate the situation of displaced Jews in Europe." The statement added that no settlement of the problem could be achieved which would be fully satisfactory to all the parties concerned, and that it must therefore be approached in a spirit of conciliation.

On October 4, following the adjournment of the Conference in London (see Section XIII following), President Truman issued a further statement in which he said that, since opposition had developed throughout the United States to the plan prepared by the joint British and United States



experts, he could not support it. He expressed the belief that the proposal of the Jewish Agency for the immediate issuance of 100,000 certificates for Jewish immigrants to Palestine and for a "viable Jewish State" in a portion of Palestine "would command the support of public opinion in the United States.\* . . . To such a solution our Government could give its support."

He added that, should a workable solution for Palestine be devised, he would "be willing to recommend to the Congress a plan for economic assistance for the development of that country."

### XIII. ATTEMPTS TO SECURE AGREEMENT

The British Government invited Arab and Jewish representatives to a conference to begin in London on September 9, 1946, with the experts' proposals—the "Morrison Plan" as it came to be called—as a basis for discussion. Since the Mufti of Jerusalem, in exile from Palestine, was barred by the British Government from attendance at the Conference, the Palestinian Arabs did not send a representative, but delegates were nominated by seven Arab States, all members of the Arab League. The Jewish Agency did not accept the invitation to attend, nor did a number of Jewish leaders invited to represent other Jewish organizations.

The Jewish Agency view was expressed in a letter from Dr. Chaim Weizmann to the Colonial Secretary, dated September 4. They were anxious, said Dr. Weizmann, to do everything possible in co-operation with the British Government to reach a satisfactory solution of the Palestine problem which would ensure lasting peace, and had even agreed, as a "supreme sacrifice," to accept partition, if a "viable Jewish State" could be established in an "adequate area of Palestine." Beyond that, no Jewish representative could go. The Morrison Plan could not be accepted as a basis for discussion since "it would deprive the Jewish people of its rights under the Mandate in 85 per cent of Western Palestine; it does not provide for genuine self-government; and it does not secure freedom of Jewish immigration and settlement." The Agency believed that progress towards a solution could be achieved better by informal talks, "without which a formal Conference would have less chance of success."

The Arab proposals, as submitted to the Conference, were published on October 3. They asked for Britain's relinquishment of the Mandate and her recognition of an independent Palestinian State not later than the end of 1948. The High Commissioner would first of all establish a Provisional Government consisting of seven Arabs and three Jews, to which all executive and legal authority would be transferred. This Government would undertake the preparation of an electoral register, which would be followed by the election of a Constituent Assembly of 60 members. Both the Provisional Government and the Assembly, in drafting and considering the constitution, would be bound by directives, issued by the High

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\* The Zionist Organization of America, at its convention on October 27, 1946, opposed partition, and reaffirmed the demand for a Jewish Commonwealth covering the whole area of Palestine.



Commissioner, which would provide, *inter alia*, for the following principles:

Applicants for nationalization would have to have been legal residents of Palestine for at least ten years; Jewish immigration would be prohibited entirely, unless and until legislation provided otherwise; the existing Land Transfers Regulations to remain unchanged; the number of Jews in the Legislature should in no case exceed one-third of the total number of members.

On October 2, it was announced that the Conference would be adjourned until December 16 in order that delegates might attend the United Nations General Assembly. Subsequently, a further postponement was made until January, 1947, in order that Jewish delegates who were attending the World Zionist Conference in Basle during December should be able to be present. The Basle Conference revealed a split among the delegates on the issue of Palestine's future, some being willing to accept the principle of partition as the only solution (Dr. Weizmann's opinion), while others demanded the whole of Palestine as a Jewish State. There were also strong differences of opinion on the subject of terrorist activity. The failure of the veteran leader, Dr. Weizmann, to secure re-election as President of the Zionist Council was widely regarded as a further blow against the possibility of a solution by agreement, and, in fact, the decision was taken to boycott the Palestine Conference in London. Jewish representatives were, therefore, present at London in an unofficial and consultative capacity only. As in the past, Jews and Arabs could not be brought together to the Conference table.

#### XIV. FINAL BRITISH PROPOSALS

Since the "Morrison Plan" proved unacceptable both to Jews and Arabs as a basis for discussion, the British Delegation submitted fresh proposals\* at the Palestine Conference on February 7, 1947, and also communicated them to representatives of the Jewish Agency who were absent from the Conference. The proposals suggested that "His Majesty's Government should administer a five-year Trusteeship over Palestine, with the declared object of preparing the country for independence." This proposal was shown to be in accordance with the obligations of the Mandate, and in full conformity with the provisions of Article 76 of the United Nations Charter; and the statement added that "if it emerged from the present discussions that the initiation of such a policy would command substantial acquiescence from both communities in Palestine, interim arrangements in harmony with this policy could no doubt be made in advance of its formal approval by the United Nations."

Despite the melancholy fact that previous efforts of the Mandatory Government to associate the population of the country with the Administration had "invariably broken down because it has not been possible to find a basis of co-operation acceptable to both Arabs and Jews," the Brit-

\* Embodied in Cmd. 7044: *Proposals for the Future of Palestine, Together With the Arab Proposals and the Statement Made by Mr. Morrison on July 31*. Obtainable from B.I.S., price 15s.



ish Delegation was convinced that "forms of government must be established which have their roots in the people of the country, and which offer a prospect of full independence within a reasonably short period." The proposals for this five-year period of progress from Trusteeship to independence were:

1. Areas of local administration to be delimited in such a way as to include in each a substantial majority either of Arabs or of Jews.

2. Safeguards to be provided for the rights that are specified in the proposals of Jews in Arab areas and Arabs in Jewish areas, under the responsibility of the High Commissioner.

3. Jewish immigration to be at the rate of 4,000 monthly, or nearly 100,000 over a period of two years, after which its continuance and the rate of entry would be determined "with due regard to the principle of economic absorptive capacity, by the High Commissioner in consultation with his Advisory Council"—composed of Jews and Arabs. "In the event of disagreement, the final decision would rest with an arbitration tribunal appointed by the United Nations."

4. Control over Land Transfers, including the power to amend the existing Regulations, to be conferred on the local authorities.

5. During the period of Trusteeship, the Central Government, composed of the High Commissioner, the Advisory Council (to include representatives not only of the Arab and Jewish local Administrations, but also of labor and other organized interests) and the Executive Council (in which the proportion of Palestinians was to be progressively increased), would undertake to stimulate economic development, and to ensure local provision for the enforcement of minimum wage rates and labor conditions.

6. At the end of four years, a Constituent Assembly to be elected to prepare the establishment of an independent State. In the event of disagreement in the Constituent Assembly, the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations would be asked to advise upon future procedure.

The Memorandum concluded: "His Majesty's Government are not prepared to continue indefinitely to govern Palestine themselves merely because Arabs and Jews cannot agree upon the means of sharing its government between them. The proposals contained in the present Memorandum are designed to give the two peoples an opportunity of demonstrating their ability to work together for the good of Palestine as a whole, and so providing a stable foundation for an independent State."

These proposals were rejected by the Arab Delegation and by the Jewish Agency representatives alike.

## XV. SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

In a statement to Parliament on February 18, 1947, the Foreign Secretary (Mr. Ernest Bevin) outlined the "irreconcilable conflict of principles" with which the British Government had been faced. "For the Jews," he said, "the essential point of principle is the creation of a sovereign

Jewish State. For the Arabs, the essential point of principle is to resist to the last the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in any part of Palestine. Discussion in the last month has clearly shown there is no prospect of resolving this conflict by any settlement negotiated between the parties."

"If the conflict is to be resolved by arbitrary means," he went on, "that is not a decision which His Majesty's Government are empowered, as Mandatory, to take. His Majesty's Government have of themselves no power under the terms of the Mandate to award the country either to the Arabs or to the Jews, or even to partition it between them. It is in these circumstances that we have decided that we are unable either to accept the scheme put forward by the Arabs or by the Jews, or to impose by ourselves a solution of our own. We have, therefore, reached the conclusion that the only course now open to us is to submit the problem to the United Nations."

Mr. Bevin added that, although immediate notice would be given, the Government saw great difficulty in having the matter considered by the United Nations before the regular session of the General Assembly in September, and he begged that "all concerned will exercise restraint until their judgment is known."

In a further statement in Parliament on February 25,\* Mr. Bevin emphasized that although the British proposals had been consistent with the Mandate, the Government had not been prepared to consider their imposition by force. "His Majesty's Government, after reviewing the situation, came to the conclusion rightly or wrongly that, after all the force we had seen throughout the world in the last 25 years, force applied to this problem would not produce a final solution, and might create wider difficulties in the Middle East, and might indeed start us on a road leading in another quarter of a century to another war."

On April 2, while formally lodging with the Secretary-General of the United Nations the request that Palestine be placed on the agenda of the next regular session of the General Assembly (September), the British Delegation at the same time suggested that a special session be called for the purpose of constituting and instructing a preparatory committee, owing to the desirability of an early settlement in Palestine.

A majority of members of the United Nations having given their concurrence, the special session was summoned for April 28.

## XVI. CONTINUED LAWLESSNESS

Since the fall of 1946, there has been an increase rather than an abatement in acts of violence committed by members of the two Jewish extremist groups, Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Group. Bombed buildings, the planting of mines on thoroughfares over which British military vehicles pass, and the ambushing and killing of troops and police have been daily occurrences. Late in December, four British Army men were kidnapped and flogged in retaliation for the judicial caning of a Jewish youth sentenced for participation in a bank robbery, while two British civilians—one a judge—were kidnapped in January. These acts of violence were condemned by many leading Jews, both inside and out of Palestine. It is

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\* See Appendix A.



recognized that, although the reputed purpose of the terrorists is to bring pressure on the Palestine Government and the British military authorities, and force a decision in favor of extreme Zionist demands, some criminal elements have inevitably become attached to the underground army.

By January 31, 1947, the situation had so far worsened that it was thought advisable to evacuate all British women and children from Palestine. This was carried out, and an appeal made through the Jewish Agency to the Jewish Community to assist the Government in rooting out terrorism. This appeal was rejected by the Jewish Agency with the result that tension, already acute, was increased. Jewish extremists made the Dov Gruner case the instrument of retaliatory threats against the Palestine Government, and, by February, conditions had further deteriorated.

On March 1, Jewish extremists blew up the Goldsmith Officers' Club in Jerusalem, killing 20 persons and injuring 26 others. A few days later, as a consequence of this and other outrages, martial law was imposed in certain districts of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, and Petah Tiqva to enable intensive searches to be made for those responsible. Martial law ended on March 17 after 78 persons had been rounded up with some help from the Jewish community of Palestine.

The submission of the Palestine question to the United Nations and the summoning of the Special Assembly caused no diminution of violence in Palestine. On April 22, a military and civilian passenger train was blown up outside Rehovoth with the loss of eight lives. Speaking on the following day in a House of Lords Debate on Palestine initiated by Liberal peers, Lord Hall (First Lord of the Admiralty and former Colonial Secretary) condemned those who gave financial aid to terrorists as being just as guilty as the terrorists themselves. Replying to a question, he said that since August 1, 1945, the death toll due to terrorist activities in Palestine had been 68 members of the armed forces, 30 police and 15 civilians. The wounded included 191 troops, 49 police and nine civilians (casualties in the Rehovoth rail disaster not included). During the same period, 168 Jews were convicted for terrorist activities, and 28 sentenced to death. Four of these were executed and 22 committed to life imprisonment. Thirty-three terrorists were killed in clashes with the police.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (see above, Section VI) had expressed the view that "the Jewish Agency should at once resume active co-operation with the Mandatory in the suppression of terrorism and of illegal immigration." Similar appeals from the British Government had met with some, but by no means sufficient, success. On April 27, on the eve of the special General Assembly of the United Nations, the Jewish Agency announced from Jerusalem that it had opened a new campaign against terrorism, mainly directed to the youth of the Jewish community. Further extremist outrages were, however, reported during the following week.

## XVII. CONCLUSION

Immigration, as Lord Hall said in the House of Lords Debate on April 23, 1947, is "the crux of the problem." He pointed out that from between 80,000 and 90,000 the Jewish population of Palestine had risen

to nearly 700,000, and that "the major portion of that number—between 400,000 and 450,000—is made up of immigrants." Mr. Bevin had stated in his speech of February 25 (see Appendix A) that up to that time an additional 21,000 Jews had been admitted into Palestine over and above the quota of 75,000 laid down in the 1939 White Paper; and he added that the present immigration rate of 18,000 a year was "above the average for the whole Mandatory period." The final proposals made by the British Delegation at the Palestine Conference (see Section XIV) suggested a much higher rate of immigration (48,000 a year), which would within two years have gone very far to implement the recommendation of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry for the admission of 100,000 Jewish victims of Nazi and Fascist tyranny "as rapidly as conditions permit." But this British plan, as has been shown, was rejected by both Jews and Arabs.

Nevertheless, uncertified immigrants have continued to arrive in great numbers aboard small and often unseaworthy vessels. Such immigrants, in line with the policy set forth in August, 1946, are taken on British transports to Cyprus, where they are maintained in camps to await subsequent transfer to Palestine under their specified allotment of the 1,500 monthly quota, which is still being continued pending a settlement. In the debate on April 23, Lord Hall described the methods adopted by those responsible for illegal immigration as "criminal"—"three persons to every gross registered ton of shipping; 1,200 persons on a ship of 400 tons gross weight. . . . Had it not been for the fact that they were towed in by the Royal Navy, several ships with thousands of these poor deluded people aboard would have been lost. I do want to utter this warning: that one day, and perhaps soon, one of those ships will be lost at sea. His Majesty's Government will not take any responsibility for the lives which will be sacrificed should such a disaster occur."

In conclusion, Lord Hall said:

"Pending the political decision it is the duty of the Palestine administration to maintain the *status quo*, and they are striving to carry out their duty in circumstances of such difficulty as rarely, if ever, have confronted the administration of any country. It should be made fully clear that any attempt in the meantime to change the *status quo* by resort to violence is a direct affront to the United Nations. Whatever the outcome of the discussions of the United Nations, I have no hesitation in affirming that this country has already rendered considerable and impartial service to the inhabitants of Palestine, Arab and Jew alike, which deserves the highest praise."

## APPENDIX A

**Statement by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, in the House of Commons, February 25, 1947**

The course of events has led His Majesty's Government to decide that the problem of Palestine must be referred to the United Nations, as outlined in the announcement which I made to the House last week. The problem of Palestine is a very vexed and complex one. There is no denying the fact that the Mandate contained contradictory promises. In the first place, it promised the Jews a National Home, and, in the second



place, it declared that the rights and position of the Arabs must be protected. Therefore, it provided for what was virtually an invasion of the country by thousands of immigrants, and, at the same time, said that this was not to disturb the people in possession. The question, therefore, arose whether this could be accomplished without a conflict, and events in the last 25 years have proved that it could not.

The Jews set about colonizing, and there is no doubt that in the sphere they have developed they have carried out some very great experiments. Many of the Arabs, as I shall explain later, are involved in those developments, such as citrus growing which is vital to the economy of Palestine. As far as Jewish development is concerned, everybody in this country who has been associated with the affair, certainly up to 1931, assumed that it was a National Home for the Jews about which we were talking. I want to remind the House, however, that that is not the issue now. All that is over. The issue which the United Nations must consider and decide is, first, shall the claims of the Jews that Palestine is to be a Jewish State be admitted; second, shall the claim of the Arabs that it is to be an Arab State, with safeguards for the Jews under the decision for a National Home be admitted; or, third, shall it be a Palestinian State, in which the interests of both communities are as carefully balanced and protected as possible? I have put it in that form, because in all negotiations I have had to conduct, and whatever proposals we have adopted today, I come back every time to these three provisions. I cannot escape them and I do not think anyone who has been Colonial Secretary, or who has handled this problem hitherto, however much the question has been argued, has in fact, escaped them.

That, therefore, raises the issue which has got to be decided and we, as Mandatory Power, cannot solve that problem until the United Nations have recommended which of these three alternatives is to form the basis of the future organization of Palestine. We, as Mandatory Power, have no power to make that decision. Nothing that I can find in any of the documents, either at the League of Nations, or in the discussions between the great Powers at Versailles and after, indicate that we have that power. The Mandate certainly does not give it, and the Anglo-American Committee, faced with the problem that we have been faced with, came to the view not to recommend a Jewish State, and everybody who has touched the Palestine question is forced back to that every time. I really want the House to face up to this problem which His Majesty's Government have to face up to now. In our recent negotiations the Colonial Secretary and I, over and over again, came up against this fundamental problem. All the proposals we have made for the gradual evolution of Palestine towards independence have been judged by the Arabs and the Jews according to the effect they might have on the final decision of the kind of state Palestine is to be when it becomes independent, and independent it must become. The Mandatory Power cannot go on forever.

Let me trace the history of this business since we came into office. We gave early consideration to the problem, and discussed the matter very fully. I do not escape the fact—I do not desire to escape it—that when I was a member of the Coalition Government with right hon. Gentlemen opposite I took my corner in trying to see what solution we could find

for Palestine. I have a perfectly open mind about it. All I want is a settlement, and I want a settlement because this is one of those sore spots in the Middle East that may, if not settled, lead to much wider trouble—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Various schemes have been evolved in the past, including partition, but all which have come before me, whether in the Coalition Government or in this Government, would have to be put into operation by force. That is to say, everybody came to the conclusion that we should not get agreement, but that we would have to come to a decision and then apply force to put it into operation.

His Majesty's Government, after reviewing the situation, came to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that after all the force we had seen throughout the world in the last 25 years, force applied to this problem would not produce a final solution, that it might create wider difficulties in the Middle East, and might, indeed, start us on a road leading in another quarter of a century to another war. That we have had to face, having regard to the importance to the world economy of the raw materials and the whole position of the Middle East. We, therefore, proceeded, not too hopefully, but with the conviction that it was our duty, to make the effort to try to get a negotiated settlement. To begin with, and I want to make this very clear, we agreed that we could not enforce the White Paper of 1939 as a basis for our policy. It has been suggested that all that was needed was to tear up the White Paper. This raises a very serious question in international affairs, one that cannot be approached lightly. Statements have often been made in this House and outside that, when Labor was in Opposition, they stated that they would not be bound by that decision of the Government of the day. But there are many precedents. It has always been accepted, in international affairs at least, that the party coming into office after making such a declaration, does not just tear up existing undertakings, but seeks to change them by proper negotiation and by substituting another policy. I have to emphasize this because this House of Commons did vote for the White Paper. It is true that the Mandates Commission did not endorse it—

MR. CLEMENT DAVIES (Montgomery): Not this House—a predecessor.

MR. BEVIN: I always regard this House as continuing from eternity to eternity, and I meant it in that sense. I think I am right—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I did not mean the actual Members of this House. What I meant was that the House in 1939 did, in fact, vote—and the Arabs took that as a decision of the British Parliament—[*Interruption.*] I must say that I should be reluctant to remain Foreign Secretary for five minutes, if I thought that I went to an international conference with a vote of a majority of this House and gave undertakings, and that those undertakings were to be torn up without proper negotiations at the end—

MR. SYDNEY SILVERMAN (Nelson and Colne): Would my right hon. Friend say that the White Paper of 1939 represents any kind of agreement or undertaking with any other Power with whom we were in international relations? Was it not merely a declaration of policy by the Mandatory Power.

MR. BEVIN: It was regarded by the Arab States at that conference as an undertaking by the British Parliament and one which would be car-



ried out. May I suggest—[*Interruption.*] Please do not interrupt. We are dealing with one of the most serious problems. I suggest to my hon. Friend that if the vote had been the reverse way, and an undertaking of an inverse character had been given to the Jews, the hon. Member would have been on his feet and said that this was a vote from the House, and that we could not tear it up. Really, I must stand for this as a point of principle, because all my negotiations of any kind with Foreign Powers depend on the integrity of a vote of this House of Commons—

MR. TURNER-SAMUELS (Gloucester): If that is right, how can the Foreign Secretary reconcile that with the statement of the Prime Minister on 1st July last year in which he said:

“The Government have never stood by the White Paper policy. . . .

It is quite wrong to say that we are carrying on the White Paper policy.”—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 1st July, 1946; Vol. 424, c. 1907.]

MR. BEVIN: That is quite right, and if the hon. and learned Member will wait a moment, I will show him why. The point I am making is this—and really I must ask the House, whether it is my party or any party, to support me in this because it is fundamental—I am going away next week to Moscow, and when I go to Moscow I shall be asked to give undertakings. When I arrive at conclusions, I shall have to say that it is subject to the ratification of the House of Commons, and when that ratification of the House takes place—whatever the vote is—and that undertaking is given, I assume that whatever party succeeds us, whatever its political color may be, will honor that undertaking until it negotiates a change. I must ask my hon. Friends to accept that; otherwise they ought never to send me to an international conference at all for any purpose. Really I have to state this, because it is fundamental to the carrying on of the business of the country. This is not a question of continuity of policy, but a question of keeping one's word, and, indeed, if there is one thing I have grown up in, not merely as a politician but as a trade union leader, it is that I have kept my word, whatever the opposition may have been.

Therefore, I told the Arabs quite straight that my party declared that they could not be bound by this, and that a change must be negotiated, and I have proceeded on that policy with my right hon. Friend the Colonial Secretary ever since. I think that is a perfectly legitimate action to take. Thereupon, the present question arose; what should the approach be? The position had become accentuated by the European situation and I thought, with the then Colonial Secretary, that the first step which should be taken—and I agree with the right hon. Gentleman who corrected me the other night about the date—was to decide about immigration. The question was, Should immigration come to an end at 31st December, 1945? I communicated with the Arabs and told them that I thought it should not. My right hon. Friend the Colonial Secretary in his Department took it up with the Arabs in Palestine—I dealt with the Arab States—and we agreed that it should continue at 1,500 a month. I will not say, and it would be wrong of me to say, that there was an agreement by the Arabs to do that, but there was at least acquiescence, and on that acquiescence in a friendly way we proceeded to issue certificates at 1,500 a month.

Since we took that decision in December of 1945, 21,000 Jewish immi-

grants have entered Palestine over and above the 75,000 for whom the White Paper provides, and immigration now is proceeding at the rate of 18,000 a year. There seems to be an impression everywhere that this is an abnormally low rate of entry, but the fact is that it has only been exceeded five times in the whole history of the Mandate—in 1925, and in the first four years of the Nazi rule in Germany. In other words, 18,000 a year is above the average for the whole Mandatory period and I must say that I felt, having moved up to that as the first step in the opening of negotiations, it was not a bad rate of entry. But I think we might have been able to do more for the Jews, and have increased this rate at that time, if the bitterness of feeling which surrounds this problem of immigration had not been increased by American pressure for the immediate admission of 100,000. I do not desire to create any ill feeling with the United States; in fact, I have done all I can to promote the best possible relations with them, as with other countries, but I should have been happier if they had had regard to the fact that we were the Mandatory Power, and that we were carrying the responsibility—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear." ]—and if they had only waited to ask us what we were doing. Then we could have informed them. But, instead of that, a person named Earl Harrison went out to their zone in Germany collecting certain information, and a report was issued. I must say it really destroyed the basis of good feeling that we—the Colonial Secretary and I—were endeavoring to produce in the Arab States, and it set the whole thing back.

However, we realize that we had to take American interest in this problem into account. Accordingly, having regard to what they had said, we invited them to join us in forming the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. Now I must point out that I have been very severely criticized by people in the United States for not accepting the Committee's Report. I was reminded of this when I was over there recently almost every day. But none of the Report was accepted by the United States except one point, namely, the admission of 100,000 immigrants. I was perfectly willing to stand up to the problem of the Report as a whole, which included 10 points. I have never gone back on that, but even if I had, as events have turned out, it would not have settled the Palestine problem, as I shall show before I sit down. We could not undertake this, except as a part of the general settlement, and we had to continue our efforts to work out policy.

Our first attempt resulted in the plan for provisional autonomy. I must remind the House that the Anglo-American Committee reported against a Jewish State. Therefore, taking the Report as a basis, we put forward this provisional autonomy plan as a basis for negotiation. We did not lay it down but, if I may say so, if other countries with different races and different religions can work on the cantonal principle, I really cannot see why it cannot work in Palestine as elsewhere. We then tried to convene a conference of both Arabs and Jews. We tried very hard to get the Jews into conference. I interviewed their representatives in Paris, in London, and I tried to persuade them to the best of any ability to come in and face the issue with us.

I profoundly regret they did not. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I



know—and I do not want to set one section of Jews against another—that those who have been trained in England and grown up under English customs and practice, wanted to come in, but the Jewish Agency, very largely dominated by New York, would not really come in, and it was with gentlemen from there that I had to deal so much. They would not join the conference unless, as a prerequisite, we would more or less commit ourselves to a Jewish State in advance, either partition or as a whole. How could I? I had to consult Arabs, I had to discuss the whole problem, and how could any representative of His Majesty's Government give an advance declaration one way or the other? However, we did agree to put any plan which the Jewish Agency cared to submit on the agenda, and to examine it on its merits whatever it involved.

The proposal I put to them was, "Here is the British plan. There is the Arab plan—it by then had been drawn up. You have your plan. Let us take these three plans, and see if, out of them, we can produce a solution." I knew from experience that I could not get them in the same room. That, too, I think is regrettable when you have a problem of this character to solve. And, in this case, it was the Arabs who were the greatest difficulty. I want to make a balanced statement on this, quite fairly. They argued that experience of the past was not helpful, but the Jews were willing if I would accept the Jewish State, in some form, in advance. I could not do that, so they did not come into the conference. Neither could I get them into one room.

I did reach a stage, however, in meeting the Jews separately, in which I advanced the idea of an interim arrangement, leading ultimately to self-government. I indicated that I did not mind whether it was five years, or ten years, or three years, or whatever it was. I said to them, "If you will work together for three, five, or ten years, it might well be that you will not want to separate. Let us try to make up the difference." At that stage things looked more hopeful. There was a feeling—I do not think I overestimated it—when they left me in the Foreign Office that day, that I had the right approach at last. But what happened? I went back to the Paris Peace Conference, and next day—I believe it was the Day of Atonement, or a special day of the Jewish religion—my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister telephoned me at midnight, and told me that the President of the United States was going to issue another statement on the 100,000. I think the country and the world ought to know about this.

I went next morning to the Secretary of State, Mr. Byrnes, and told him how far I had got the day before. I believed we were on the road, if only they would leave us alone. I begged that the statement be not issued, but I was told that if it was not issued by Mr. Truman, a competitive statement would be issued by Mr. Dewey. In international affairs I cannot settle things if my problem is made the subject of local elections. I hope I am not saying anything to cause bad feeling with the United States, but I feel so intensely about this. A vexed problem like this, with a thousand years of religious differences, has to be handled with the greatest detail and care. No one knows that more than I do. I have seen these tense religious struggles in parts of this country, in Ireland, and elsewhere. I know what it involves. It can lead to civil war before you know where you are. However, the statement was issued. I was dealing with Jewish

representatives at the time, and I had to call it off because the whole thing was spoilt.

One thing is clear. I had to open the conference with the Arabs alone, and they put the point to me that they wanted finality. They wanted to determine what the future of Palestine was to be. The Jews also want finality, provided it takes the form of a Jewish State. But they would be prepared to see British rule continued as a protecting Power, provided it was clearly aiming at a Jewish Sovereign State. The conference was suspended at that time. The United Nations was meeting in New York. I thought that by going to New York, I could talk to a lot of people, and try to help the thing along by meeting people, and so on. While there, I discussed the matter with the Secretary of State, Mr. Byrnes, and at the end he made a public statement saying that the basis upon which Great Britain was proposing to hold the conference, in his view, merited the attendance of the Jews as well as the Arabs. Even that, from America, produced no results.

Then came the second session of the conference with the Arabs. In view of the difficulty, we agreed to have informal talks with the Jewish Agency. We did not press them to come into conference. I have been too long a negotiator to stand on form. I thought it was better, if they could not see their way clear to come into the conference, that I should meet them informally, and see whether, with my colleagues, I could get over this difficulty. When we met, the Arabs adhered to their plan for a unitary independent State in Palestine. They have reiterated at every meeting that they have never accepted the Palestine Mandate, nor recognized the legality of the Balfour Declaration. Nevertheless, they told us they were willing to recognize the results of this policy so far as the present residents in Palestine were concerned. These included about 600,000 Jews, now nearer 700,000 I am told, already living in Palestine with 1,200,000 Arabs.

I say this in all seriousness. If it were only a question of relieving Europe of 100,000 Jews, I believe a settlement could be found. I believe a settlement can now be found if it is purely the humanitarian problem I have to solve. Unfortunately, that is not the position. From the Zionist point of view the 100,000 is only a beginning, and the Jewish Agency talk in terms of millions. I think the Arabs could be persuaded to agree to 100,000 new immigrants, in an orderly way, on humanitarian grounds, having regard to the European situation if—and I emphasize this—immigration after that, was to be determined by the elected representatives of the people of Palestine.

The claim made by the Arabs is a very difficult one to answer. We here in Great Britain as a House of Commons determine whether people shall be admitted into this country or not. No one else is doing that. Why should an external agency, largely financed from America, determine how many people should come into Palestine, and interfere with the economy of the Arabs, who have been there for 2,000 years? This is what I have to face. There may be an answer to it, if it is on the merits of how long the respective parties have owned the country. But, the Arabs say they are not going to be pushed out, by an external agency, from a country which they regard as their own—I am using their words—and in which



they have been living for just about as long as England has been a Christian country. That is what the House has to face, and it is a difficult thing to answer. I do not know what would happen if a lot of Welshmen tried to drive the Englishmen out. There would have to be a buffer State. The difficulty would be no doubt intense. Under the Arab plan the Jewish National Home—and they now accept the National Home—although they did not accept the Balfour Declaration or the Mandate, they will accept the National Home—

MR. KENNETH LINDSAY (Combined English Universities): Does that also mean partition?

MR. BEVIN: No. I will deal with partition in a moment. But they accept the Home within a unitary State. That gives an Arab majority. I have argued with both Jews and Arabs. What is it we have got to solve? Are the Jews a State or are they a religion? I have got to face the question of Catholics, Mohammedans and everybody else, and really, this is a difficult thing to decide. I cannot believe that if there is a unitary State in Palestine every Arab will vote for an Arab candidate—he may in the first instance—or that every Jew will vote for a Jewish candidate. About the only constituency in this country which returned a Communistic candidate was Mile End and they have a perfect right to do so. No one is elected to this House either as a Jew or a Christian. One is elected as a man, as a representative. Therefore, one will have Communists, one will have Socialists, and it depends on the intelligence of the people whether there will be Conservatives. It may be that there will be some liberalism, even in Palestine. There is no doubt that people will form views which will crystallize. Therefore, the Arabs argue, “Leave it to the intelligence of the people who live in the State.”

MR. S. SILVERMAN: Will my right hon. Friend explain to the House exactly what he understands by the word “National” in the phrase “Jewish National Home?”

MR. BEVIN: I am sorry that I cannot give an accurate definition, and Balfour is dead. I do not say that unkindly, but whether anyone can explain what people meant at the time, I do not know. When I used it, there was an understanding on the part of the Arabs that in Palestine, in view of certain historical associations, those Jews who had migrated there should have their liberty and freedom—no pogroms, no persecution—and be equal citizens of the State. That makes it a national home—[*Interruption.*] My national home is in England, with the same conditions.

MR. TURNER-SAMUELS: My right hon. Friend says that the Arabs are prepared to accept the National Home. If he does not know what that is, and cannot give a definition of it, what is the good of telling the House that the Arabs are prepared to accept it?

MR. BEVIN: Because they agreed in their plan—hon. Members have it before them—that you can have your own language, your own university, your own religion, everything—[*Interruption.*] My hon. Friend says, “Very kind of them,” but if other countries that persecute Jews had only given them that, there would never have been a problem.

MR. LIPSON (Cheltenham): It is the people who matter.

MR. BEVIN: It is human rights which are the basis of the United Na-

tions, and in the proposals, which I thought were perhaps too limited—I did not accept them—they were fundamental principles which I thought gave effect to what I understood to be the basis of the claim originally made by Nathan Rothschild and other people—I have read all the papers—in the original discussions.

I want to put the other side. The Jews say that if that is done they will be tolerated as a minority. I cannot alter the balance of people in a State—that is impossible—any more than one can alter it between Nehru and Jinnah today in India. The numbers are there, and one cannot alter it in any country. Then we tried our hand at another plan. Members will have seen it in the White Paper. The plan had certain features common to the Anglo-American Report and the Provincial Autonomy Plan. From the Arab point of view, those proposals had the advantage that they placed in Arab hands the maintenance of existing safeguards against the dispossession of Arab cultivators, and at the end of two years, they would have given the Arabs a voice in determining the rate of immigration. We proposed to set up a Governor's Council, and in two years—and this was not based on anything but humanitarian principles—96,000 people would have been allowed from Europe, without any question of economic absorptive capacity. That was the proposal. Afterwards, the High Commissioner was to consult a council of both Jews and Arabs, and after consulting them he was to decide, on the basis of economic absorptive capacity, incorporating the words of the right hon. Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill), which he included in the 1922 White Paper.

MR. JANNER (Leicester, West): Will my right hon Friend permit me to ask one question, a rather important one? What is the proposal with regard to the fulfilment of the provisions in the Mandate about the Jewish Agency, which is recognized as an international body?

MR. BEVIN: I will come to that, but my hon. Friend is delaying my statement, and I hope that I shall be allowed to proceed. We proposed that if the High Commissioner's decision was not accepted by either party, the Secretary-General of the United Nations would appoint an arbitration tribunal, and we, as the Mandatory Power, would abide by the result. Was that not reasonable? What was the answer? It was that that proposal was rejected because we proposed that the Arabs should be consulted at all. Really, His Majesty's Government could not accept a position in which one was going to admit people into a country, and representatives of the people living in it must not be consulted. That was really too tall an order, and I could not, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, accept that. I am saying this because I am leading up to the point where I shall say, at the end, that there is a chance of a settlement yet, without going to the United Nations, if people will come off their arbitrary positions. I am still open to try.

Then the other difficulty was that the present Government have no roots in the people at all. It is an alien Government imposed on the top by a Mandatory government. I do not know what previous people who held the office of Colonial Secretary had in their minds, but I am perfectly sure in the discussion of this problem during the five years when I was in the Coalition Government it was never intended that we should be a Mandatory Power forever. It was intended to lead to something and



that the regulation of our relationship with Palestine should, in the end, be on a treaty basis and not a Mandatory basis. That is as I understood it, and I believe that there is agreement on that. Therefore, I thought it would be a good thing. Suggestions have been put to me over and over again by hon. Members of this House and by Members of another place. "Why not try to establish a British Dominion to try to solve the problem?" But really it is too late for that.

The Trusteeship Council has been established, and there is no other road but the establishment of a Trusteeship leading to independence from a Mandatory position, unless we get agreement between the parties, and there was no chance of agreement. Therefore, we proposed a Trusteeship for five years—for two years with 96,000 immigrants, and arbitration after that on the question of the economic absorptive capacity—and that we should begin at once by creating municipal areas in certain parts of Palestine which would have Jewish majorities, and others which would have Arab majorities. In order to achieve that, we designed our plans to give the Jews the benefit of Tel Aviv. It is not realized that 78 per cent of the Jews live in Tel Aviv and the balance are on the land. It is sometimes assumed that they are all on the land. That is not true. They are an urban population.

MR. OLIVER STANLEY (Bristol, West): The right hon. Gentleman said that 78 per cent live in Tel Aviv. I do not think he meant that. I think he meant that they live in urban districts.

MR. BEVIN: I beg pardon. They live in urban areas. Taking the Tel Aviv population with that of other urban areas, we have this majority of 78 per cent. It is quite clear that the police for the maintenance of order have no roots in the place. We suggested devising a police system like our own which would be partly central and partly municipal in the respective areas. It would be recruited in a way similar to that adopted in Birmingham, or any other local government area in this country. This was suggested so as to begin building up a government with roots in the people, ready to hand over. After four years, we suggested a constituent assembly which should endeavor to work out a Constitution. If they could not succeed—this is not British territory; we hold it under trust—we would return to the United Nations and ask for their help and advice. We felt that if we could begin self-government, begin getting people to work together, it would help to solve the problem. I am convinced that if the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine—I emphasize in Palestine—are given a chance to work together, they will work together and solve this problem, but if it is to be settled in accordance with the Jewish Agency's dictates, it will never be settled. I am speaking, I hope, impartially.

MR. JANNER: With the greatest respect—

HON. MEMBERS: Order.

MR. BEVIN: I have given way many times. In the Citrus Board, in the trade boards and the various boards of commerce, they do work together. If they can work together in trade and commerce in that way, personally I am convinced that if given the chance and removed from political difficulty, then the Jews and Arabs will develop a State of which they can well be proud. That is my view, and I am entitled to my view after all

these negotiations. We have been compelled to maintain a Government with which the people, as I say, have not been sufficiently associated. We, therefore, tried a new method. It was rejected.

In the other States of the Middle East where we also had a Mandate, it has led to self-government—in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and all the rest. I want to suggest that the cultural development of the Arabs and Jews in Palestine is of as high a standard as the cultural development and aptitude for government to be found in any other Arab State. That being so, we rather pinned our faith on developing independence in that way. If this policy was expressed in connection with any other place in the world, I believe this House, the United Nations, and everybody else, would say that our policy was right in that we were aiming for independence, getting rid of the Mandate and developing self-government and self-determination with proper protection for the rights of any minorities. That has been our policy and I think if this was not Palestine it would have been successful.

I was asked a question about defining the National Home. This has been a great puzzle to me. When the Balfour Declaration and the subsequent Mandate were made, nobody indicated, as far as I can discover, when the National Home would be established. I cannot find it anywhere. Was it millions of Jews; was it a majority; was it a Jewish State, or what was it? The only expression that I can find is this vague expression of a "Jewish National Home." I know the reason for this Declaration. I know why it was made, but I do not believe it would help the discussion now. It was thought by most people prior to 1939 that the steps that had been taken up to date did really fulfill the Balfour Declaration. Between the Labor Party and the party then in office a great dispute was carried on in this House. But, frankly, the more one reads the documents, the more difficult it is to find any guide as to when a Jewish National Home has been completed or established. It was for that reason that we thought if we developed these municipal areas, if we transferred the land regulations, the laws and the police, and all this kind of thing, to majorities in that area, we should have established in fact the National Home. We should have established the National Home within a unitary State, with a free chance to the Jews for their own development, which would have allowed them in the joint Parliament of Arabs and Jews to have had their say in the affairs of the world.

That leads me to another point, which is also a very difficult one. It is said that, if we have a unitary State, the Jews, as Jews, will not be in the United Nations. Really, this is raising a very big question. Are we in the United Nations as a religion, are we in the United Nations as a people geographically situated, or how are we in it? If the United Nations is to arrive at a position in which it will have five or six great religions as dominated factors, then that will be a very disturbing situation, and as far as I am concerned, at any rate—

MR. TURNER-SAMUELS *rose*—

MR. BEVIN: I have given way very often already, and the hon. and learned Gentleman will have his turn. I must raise this issue, because really it is fundamental. I have to deal with the points put to me by the Jewish Agency, and the Jewish Agency says that, "as nationals, but not



as Jews, we shall be in the United Nations." I never knew, and I never thought, that we had promised or done anything to establish a situation of that character, but, if that is the case, let us do it with our eyes open. This is one of the difficulties which I see, and I say this because I want both the Jews and the Arabs to reconsider their position. We are united in the United Nations today as States, and, within every State of the United Nations, there are any number of religions. It may be different, but that is the situation that is put to me, and I hope it will be debated and brought out, because it does raise a very serious position, especially for a Commonwealth like this, which represents every possible phase of people in the world. We cannot divide ourselves like that.

Therefore, I have asked, over and over again, if it will not be possible to have a Palestinian State, and with the ability that is there—the business ability, and it is exceptional and has done remarkably well, the statesmanship and the aptitude for government—cannot we find a place through a Palestinian State to deal with these problems in the United Nations from a State point of view? That is the question which I should like debated in the course of this Debate, because it is the issue upon which the whole crux of this settlement really depends. I hope it will not be dealt with in any spirit of prejudice, because we have to face these issues, and because, when we go to the United Nations next September, these are the issues which I suggest are going to come before us. Take the position of Russia. I do not know how many races there are in that great territory, covering one-seventh of the globe, but it is colossal, and I have never heard that this particular theory has been advanced there. Therefore, I ask for consideration of this problem.

May I now turn to the question of partition? A good many people have said that the way out of the difficulty is to have partition. I am sure that, if we have agreed to partition, we would have had a tremendous row as to where the frontier should be. We have drawn frontiers in the Provincial Autonomy Plan; I have seen the Jewish idea of partition in an American paper, but we really cannot make two viable States of Palestine, however we may try. We can make one viable State, and, so far as I can see, or as far as any student of the map could see, the only thing we could do would be to transfer the rest to one of the Arab States, but I ask what trouble is that going to cause in the whole of the Arab world? That will set going a conflict which will be worse than the conflict we have tried to settle. It has been suggested that we could do it by knitting in Transjordan, and it is argued that we carried out partition when we created Transjordan. That may be, but, if we try now, with Palestine as we know it today, to make it into two viable States, I say that we cannot do it. If we try to take away the taxable capacity of the best areas of Palestine for productive purposes, and that taxation goes entirely to the Jewish portion, you cannot expect the others to accept it. You cannot expect to make the one State dependent upon somebody else. The best partition scheme, and the most favorable one that I have seen up to now, has the effect that it would leave, at the present moment, 450,000 Jews and 360,000 Arabs in that Jewish State. I put that to the Arabs quite frankly, and what was their answer? The Arabs say: "If it is wrong for the Jews to be in a minority of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  or 40 per cent in the whole country, what justifica-

tion is there for putting 380,000 Arabs under the Jews? What is your answer to that?" I have no answer to that.

Therefore, you transfer one large issue in solving your problem by partition, and there are only two possible consequences. Either the Arabs in the partitioned State must always be an Arab minority, or else they must be driven out—the one thing or the other—and, on that basis, I am afraid that I should be led, and the Government would be led to a worse position. I have been asked, "Why go to the United Nations?" Any remedy that has been put up to the Government in the form of creating a Jewish State will lead to one result—the Arab States will take you to the United Nations. Supposing we partitioned the country now, and the question then went to the United Nations, Syria, or some other country, would take us to the United Nations, where we should have our conduct discussed on the basis of our legal action in carving up a State that was not ours, and I venture to suggest after my experiences in New York last year, that Britain would be placed in a very funny position. It is indefensible. We can discuss all these things, I know, quite easily, but, really, we cannot do that.

Therefore, the Government tried to get the best they could within the Mandate, and, in the end, we came to the conclusion that this Mandate is really unworkable. I think we could establish a case that we have carried out what the Mandate originally intended, provided that the problem had not been accentuated by the Hitler regime. If we take the ratio of migration and development unaccentuated by the Hitler regime, I think that the original basis of the Mandate, as a visualized in 1922, has, in fact, been carried out. What we have not been able to do is to meet with this Mandate the accentuated position created by the Hitler regime and the persecution in Germany. That is my view. I believe that continuous British Governments have done their best all the way through.

The Palestine Administration has had one of the most difficult tasks of any administration in the world. Sometimes, when reading the reports and documents, I wonder how they managed to carry through. They have had no support from the people, and they have been criticized by both sides. I believe that they have honestly tried to do their best, and that if there has been a failure in dealing with the problem of these displaced persons due to Jewish persecution, it has not been the Palestine Mandate, as administered on the original basis, which has been the cause of failure; it has been the failure of the moral consciousness of international organizations to grapple with this problem as a whole which has left the problem as it is at the present time.

Take the position now. There are a million displaced persons on the Continent. I have said to Governments, week after week, what is a million people out of 4,000 million in the world? I have made the offer—and I make it from this Box today—that, to get over this problem, we will take a proportion, together with all the other countries of the world, of that million, and add them to our population in order to get rid of this miserable state of affairs. The thing ought to be taken up and grappled with. I pleaded with the United States to take in thousands—I do not mean Jews; I do not single out Jews, and I do not think they ought to be singled out. But all States ought to do it. It is really absurd to think



that, with all the organization built up for this business, one million people could not be thus absorbed. That ought to be done, but, everywhere I go, and everywhere I turn, nobody wants them. It is a tragedy. They are doing something in South America, and in some other parts of the world, but it is relatively very little.

I will not mention the name of one great statesman in the British Commonwealth who came and gave me a half hour's lecture on the Zionist problem. When he had finished, I said to him, "How many will you take? I will get a ship and send them to you tomorrow." Not one. That is really sympathy without relief. We really ought to get rid of this problem, and if I could get back to the contribution on purely humanitarian grounds of 100,000—that is, 60,000 more than we are now taking in over two years—into Palestine, and if this political fight for a Jewish State could be put on one side, and we could develop self-government by the people resident in Palestine, without any other political issue, I would be willing to try again. I honestly believe that it could be accomplished. But, if the attack is made that this is merely the advance proportion coming out of Europe, in order that more millions can be poured in, so as to get a complete Jewish State, which we have never undertaken to create, I am afraid—and I say this with great sincerity—that will provoke a conflict in the Middle East which I do not desire to see. There is enough conflict in the world already. I am convinced that if, as I have said today, we can bring the matter back to this contribution to the relief of European suffering, which was where His Majesty's Government originally started to deal with it, then there is a chance of solution.

Finally, there is the question of time. I have been asked whether we can do something before September. It is very difficult, and I cannot give an answer. I am studying the matter to see whether there is any process by which we can get it considered earlier, under the Charter. But I must ask for more time on that. I am in consultation with Sir Alexander Cadogan, who knows the Charter inside out, to see whether anything can be done. Even now, rather than that it should go to the United Nations, I would prefer that Great Britain, with all her traditions, should be allowed to deal with the problem on a humanitarian basis. Let us remove the political conflict and get back to relieving Europe of these 100,000 people as we are asked to do, and let us be allowed to deal with any further immigrants on the basis I have suggested. If there is a dispute, let there be arbitration, and, in the quickest possible time we can create an independent State in Palestine where Jew and Arab, who have such traditions and have contributed so much to the religious and cultural thought of the world, can work together and end these century-old conflicts.

*[House of Commons Debates]*

## APPENDIX B

### THE PALESTINE MANDATE

#### A SELECTED LIST OF BRITISH OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

(These publications may be consulted in the Library of B.I.S. With the exception of those marked "Out of Print," copies may be ordered at the prices quoted from British Information Services (Sales Department), 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.)

#### A. STATEMENTS OF POLICY

1. *Mandate for Palestine* (Cmd. 1785). 1922. 10¢.

The text of the Mandate; also the note of the Secretary-General to the League of Nations regarding the inapplicability of certain articles of the Mandate to Trans-Jordan.

2. *Palestine Order in Council*, 1922 (S.R.O. 1282 of 1922).

Gives a detailed statement of the powers and duties of the Government and Judiciary with provisions for an elected Legislative Council.

3. *Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organisation* (Cmd. 1700). 1922, reprinted 1938. 20¢.

Careful explanation of British policy in Palestine is made in a number of letters from the Colonial Office to the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organisation, one of which contains the "Churchill Memorandum." The replies from the Palestine Arab Delegation register many objections both to the Balfour Declaration and to British proposals. The Zionist Organisation formally accepts the statement of British policy as set out in the correspondence.

4. *Papers relating to the Elections for the Palestine Legislative Council*, 1923 (Cmd. 1889). Out of print.

The High Commissioner's Report giving details of qualifications and method of voting and the final returns in the primary and secondary elections of May 1923, and announcement that owing to the Arab abstention from voting the establishment of the Palestine Legislative Council has been suspended.

5. *The Palestine (Amendment) Order in Council*, 1923 (S.R.O. No. 619 of 1923). 5¢.

Declares the elections null and void and authorizes the continuance of the provisions of the Order in Council, 1922.

6. *Palestine. Proposed Formation of an Arab Agency* (Cmd. 1989). 1923. Out or print.

Correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the High Commissioner agreeing to recognize an



Arab body under the Mandate similar to the Jewish Agency.  
(Contains the Balfour Declaration of November, 1917.)

7. *Palestine. Statement with regard to British Policy* (Cmd. 3582). 1930. 10¢.

Prepared for the information of the League of Nations Mandates Commission. It contains the Government's considered views on the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry into the disturbances in 1929 presided over by Sir Walter Shaw. It expresses the intention to issue a further statement of policy after receiving Sir John Hope Simpson's Report on immigration, land settlement and development.

8. *Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom* (Cmd. 3692). 1930. 15¢.

A careful explanation of the meaning attached to certain expressions in the Mandate enlarging on the Churchill statement of 1922 (see Cmd. 1700 above). In addition to the explanation of general principles the practical problems inherent in the Government of Palestine are considered under the headings Security, Constitutional Development and Economic and Social Development. This document is popularly known as the "Passfield White Paper."

9. Letter from the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to Dr. Chaim Weizmann, President of the Jewish Agency. (Text in *House of Commons Debates*, February 13, 1931. 20¢.)

Elucidates the "Passfield White Paper" (see Cmd. 3692), particularly regarding immigration. Clarifies British interpretation of certain clauses in the Mandate.

10. *Proposed New Constitution for Palestine* (Cmd. 5119) 1936. 10¢. Outlines the composition of the proposed Legislative Council and the powers of the Council and High Commissioner. In addition to nominated members, each of the three communities would have its own electorate: Arabs electing 8, Jews 3 and Christians 1. Three languages, English, Arabic and Hebrew, will be officially recognized in Palestine.

11. *Palestine Royal Commission. Report, June 22, 1937* (Cmd. 5479). \$2.05.

Known as the "Peel Report," after the chairman, Earl Peel. A plan of partition is suggested as likely to provide the most satisfactory solution, and the scope of the investigations and the reasons for this proposal are fully set out. (Contains the Balfour Declaration of November 17, 1917.)

12. —*Minutes of Evidence heard at Public Sessions, with Index* (58-134). 1937. \$9.00.

Contains the full evidence of the 62 witnesses given at 66 public meetings held by the Commission together with the speeches made at the opening session of November 12, 1936.

13. *Palestine. Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom* (Cmd. 5513). 1937. 5¢.  
Explains that H.M. Government propose to take steps to obtain freedom to give effect to a scheme of partition and cites the advantages which such a plan is deemed to offer both the Arabs and the Jews.
14. *Policy in Palestine. Despatch dated December 23, 1937, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the High Commissioner for Palestine.* (Cmd. 5634). 10¢.  
Explains that H.M. Government are in no sense committed to approval of the plan of partition recommended by the Royal Commission, and communicates the proposal to set up a technical Commission to ascertain the facts and consider in detail the practical possibilities of a scheme of partitions. A summary of statements and resolutions upon which this proposal is based, and which accompanied the despatch, is included in the paper.
15. *Palestine Partition Commission. Report 1938* (Cmd. 5854). \$1.75.  
This technical Commission was appointed to investigate fully the partition suggestions recommended by the Peel Commission. It propounds several alternative plans to none of which it can give unqualified support. The modified plan of partition which the Commission deems most likely to form a satisfactory basis of settlement would involve H.M. Government in very considerable financial liability. Two members of the Commission have signed the Report with certain reservations which are included in appended statements.
16. *Palestine Royal Commission. Memoranda prepared by the Government of Palestine* (58-133). 1937. \$2.75.  
A mine of information regarding the administration of Palestine since the Civil Administration was established in 1920.
17. *Palestine. Statement by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom* (Cmd. 5893). 1938. 5¢.  
Announces that the plan of partition has been deemed impracticable, and the steps which it is proposed to take towards finding alternative means of promoting an understanding between the Arabs and Jews.
18. *Palestine. Statement of Policy* (Cmd. 6019). 1939. 10¢.  
Following the failure of the London Conference, the Government puts forward its own proposals:
  1. Establishment of an independent Palestine State within 10 years.
  2. Limitation of Jewish immigration to 75,000 during the ensuing five years, following which no further Jewish immigration without the acquiescence of the Arabs of Palestine.
  3. The High Commissioner to be given powers to prohibit and regulate transfers of land.



19. *Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon, His Majesty's High Commissioner in Cairo, and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca, July, 1915, and March, 1916, [with a map]* (Cmd. 5957). 1939. 15¢.

See Note to No. 21 below.

20. *Statements made on behalf of His Majesty's Government during the Year 1918 in regard to the future Status of certain parts of the Ottoman Empire* (Cmd. 5964). 1939. 10¢.

Texts of the Hogarth Message and the Declaration to the Seven which form an important adjunct to the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence.

21. *Report of a Committee set up to consider certain Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon and the Sharif of Mecca in 1915 and 1916* (Cmd. 5974). 1939. 25¢.

At the meeting of the Arab and U.K. Delegations to the 1939 Conference on Palestine, a committee was appointed to consider the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence. The committee considered also the Hogarth Message and the Declaration to the Seven. The U.K. representatives agreed that the Arab contentions regarding the interpretation of the Correspondence "have greater force than has hitherto appeared," and the committee reported that it was "evident from these statements that His Majesty's Government were not free to dispose of Palestine without regard for the wishes and interests of the inhabitants of Palestine. . . ."

22. *Palestine Land Transfers Regulations. Letter to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, London, February 28, 1940* (Cmd. 6180). 10¢.

Contains the text of the Regulations prohibiting or restricting the sale of land in certain areas in Palestine and a memorandum by H.M. Government as well as the letter to the Secretary-General of the League.

23. *Exchange of Notes between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States regarding the Constitution of a Joint Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry into the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine. Washington, December 10, 1945* (Cmd. 6822). 5¢.

24. *Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry regarding the Problem of European Jewry and Palestine, April 1946* (Cmd. 6808). 45¢.

Comment and recommendations of the joint body appointed by the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom to examine economic, social and political conditions in Palestine, to hear the views of competent witnesses, and to make recommendations to their respective Governments. (This is a valuable and detailed survey of the Palestine conflict and of the situation resulting from such conflict.)

25. *Maps relating to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, April 1946* (59-96, Supplement to Cmd. 6808). \$1.30.
  1. Relief.
  2. Rainfall.
  3. Population, 1944.
  4. Land in Jewish Possession (as of December 31, 1944).
  5. Land Classification.
26. *Proposals for the Future of Palestine, July, 1946, Feb., 1947* (Cmd. 7044). 15¢.

## B. BOUNDARIES

1. *Franco-British Convention of December 23, 1920, on certain Points connected with the Mandates for Syria and the Lebanon, Palestine and Mesopotamia* (Cmd. 1195). 1921. 5¢.  
 Defines the boundaries of Syria and the Lebanon on the one side and Mesopotamia and Palestine on the other. Sets up a joint Boundary Commission.
2. *Agreement between His Majesty's Government and the French Government respecting the Boundary Line between Syria and Palestine from the Mediterranean to El Hamme* (Cmd. 1910). 1923. 70¢.  
 Defines the boundaries between Syria and Lebanon on the one side and Mesopotamia and Palestine on the other from the Mediterranean to El Hamme. Annexed is the report and survey made on the spot by the Boundary Commission, illustrated by three maps.

## C. ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL REPORTS

1. *Report of the High Commissioner on the Administration of Palestine, 1920-1925* (58-15). 1936.
2. *Reports to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year . . . 1925-1937*. 13v. Various prices.
3. *Review of Commercial Conditions in Palestine, February 1945* (54-1011-0-45). 20¢.
4. *Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development by Sir John Hope Simpson* (Cmd. 3686). 1930. \$1.00.  
 An indispensable source of information on the agriculture and industries of Palestine obtained from evidence on the spot. A detailed examination of population and immigration problems and land tenure leading to definite conclusions and recommendations.
5. *Appendix to the above Report containing Maps* (Cmd. 3687). 70¢.



## D. REPORTS AND STATEMENT ON CIVIL DISTURBANCES

1. *Palestine. Disturbances in May, 1921. Reports of the Commission of Inquiry with Correspondence relating thereto* (Cmd. 1540). 1921. 35¢.

Report on the Jaffa riots and interim report on the Khedera raid of May, 1921. Despatches from the High Commissioner on these reports and from the Secretary of State for the Colonies approving proposed emergency rules for the police and military.

2. *The Western or Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies* (Cmd. 3229). 1928. Out of print.

Memorandum on the troubles which had arisen on September 23, 1928, at the Western or Wailing Wall. Reports that the Jews had committed an infraction of the status quo and the Government of Palestine's action was therefore justified.

3. *Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929* (Cmd. 3530). Out of print.

An exhaustive survey of the Jewish-Arab controversy, often known as the Shaw Report from the name of its chairman, Sir Walter Shaw. It contains a geographical and historical introduction and chapters describing events preceding the disturbances; complaints of the Palestine Zionist Executive against the Arab Executive and the Palestine Government; Arab grievances.

4. *Report of the Commission appointed . . . to determine the Rights and Claims of Moslems and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem* (58-9096). 1931. Out of print.

The Commission consisted of three neutrals appointed with the approval of the League of Nations. Their report examines the history of the Wall and pavement, its sacredness, and the form and extent of Jewish devotions. The sole ownership of the Wall is recognized as belonging to the Moslems though Jews must be given access to it. The other conclusions of the Commission are briefly summarized under ten headings.

5. *The Palestine (Defence) Order in Council, dated July 23, 1931* (S. R. & O. 1936, No. 1058). 10¢.

Empowers the High Commissioner to make regulations for securing public safety and the defense of Palestine in time of emergency.



6. *The Palestine (Defence) Order in Council, dated March 18, 1937* (S. R. & O. 1937, No. 225). 10¢.

Empowers the High Commissioner to bring into operation such regulations as he deems necessary for securing the public safety, the defense of Palestine, the maintenance of public order, etc. The Order was effective by virtue of a proclamation made on March 24, 1937.

7. *The Palestine Admiralty Jurisdiction Order in Council dated February 2, 1937* (S. R. & O. 1937, No. 739). 5¢.

Extends to the Supreme Court constituted in Palestine the powers of Admiralty jurisdiction.

8. *The Palestine Martial Law (Defence) Order in Council, dated September 26, 1937* (S. R. & O. 1936, No. 1059). 5¢.

Makes certain amendments to the order dated July 23, 1931 (listed above), particularly with regard to the delegation of powers by the High Commissioner to the General Officer Commanding the military forces.

9. *Palestine. Statement of Information relating to Acts of Violence, July 1946* (Cmd. 6873). 10¢.

Evidence obtained by the British Government by means of Jewish Agency Executive telegrams sent between London and Jerusalem concerning organized violence in Palestine. Also details of broadcasts made by the secret radio station, "Kol Israel," on specific acts of violence and sabotage.

## E. MISCELLANEOUS

1. *Palestine Loan. Memorandum explaining Financial Resolution* (Cmd. 2696). 1926. Out of print.

Memorandum relating to a bill authorizing the Treasury to guarantee principal and interest on a loan of £4,500,000.

2. *Palestine Loan. Memorandum explaining Financial Resolution* (Cmd. 4576). 1934. Out of print.

Memorandum relating to a bill authorizing the Treasury to guarantee principal and interest on a loan not exceeding £2,000,000.

3. *Convention between the United Kingdom and the United States of America respecting the Rights of the Governments of the two Countries and their respective Nationals in Palestine, 1924* (Cmd. 2559). 1925. 10¢.

Provides that the U. S. and its nationals shall have all rights and benefits secured by the Mandate to members of the League of Nations and their nationals, and that none of these rights shall be affected by changes in the Mandate except by previous assent of the U. S. The preamble incorporates the text of the Mandate.



4. *Egypt. Commercial relations between Palestine and Egypt* (Cmd. 5361). 1937. 5¢.

An exchange of notes on August 18, 1936, between H.M. Government in the U.K. and the Egyptian Government relating to the terms under which an agreement between the two governments could be concluded so as to facilitate further commercial relations between Egypt and Palestine.

5. *Iraq. Commercial Relations between Palestine and Iraq* (Cmd. 5372). 1937. 10¢.

An exchange of notes on December 14, 1936, between H.M. Government in the U.K. and the Government of Iraq regarding a customs agreement to be entered into between the two governments with a view to facilitating trade between Palestine and Iraq.

6. *United States Rights in Palestine. Correspondence with the United States Government* (Cmd. 5544). 1937. 5¢.

Following a request by the U. S. to be informed on any contemplated changes in Palestine, the British Government reaffirms the position as set out in Cmd. 2559 (No. 3 above) and the U. S. reply reaffirms that the exclusive object of the U. S. is to protect American interests in Palestine.

7. *Customs Tariffs of the Colonial Empire (corrected up to September 30, 1945). Part IV, Palestine and Transjordan* (58-190-4). 1945. 90¢.

8. *The System of Education of the Jewish Community of Palestine* (58-201). 1946. 70¢.

Report of the Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1945 to examine the administrative machinery of the Jewish public school system, and to make recommendations for its better ordering and increased efficiency.

9. *Register of the Palestine Press prepared by the Public Information Office of the Government of Palestine.* (Not available for sale.)